

Message Text

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 EUR-12 FDRE-00 SSO-00 /082 W

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R 101417Z APR 75

FM USDEL JEC PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASH 0258

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEC PARIS 09029

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, VS, FR

SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF VIETNAMESE AND FRENCH GROUPS
IN PARIS RELATING TO VIETNAM

1. SUMMARY: THERE HAS BEEN A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY AMONG VIETNAMESE AND FRENCH GROUPS IN PARIS OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS RELATING TO VIETNAM. THESE MOVES HAVE TAKEN THE FORM OF EITHER (A) HUMANITARIAN APPEALS FOR AID TO WAR VICTIMS OR (B) POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS. SOMETIMES BOTH THEMES HAVE BEEN COMBINED. NO CLEAR FOCUS CAN BE SEEN IN THESE RATHER FREE-WHEELING ACTIONS, ALTHOUGH CALLS FOR FRENCH INVOLVEMENT HAVE BEEN FREQUENT. STATEMENTS BY VIETNAMESE "THIRD FORCE" REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY PROMINENT. WE JUDGE THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS STIRRED UP SOME OF THIS ACTIVITY, INTENTIONALLY OR OTHERWISE. END SUMMARY.

2. DEPT. HAS UNDOUBTEDLY SEEN PRESS REPORTS FROM PARIS ON THE FLURRY OF ACTIVITIES IN THE VIETNAMESE EXILE COMMUNITY HERE, AND AMONG FRENCH GROUPS, RELATING TO THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM. THESE ACTIVITIES HAVE TAKEN TWO MAIN FORMS: (A) CALLS FOR HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE WAR VICTIMS AND (B) POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS OF VARIOUS KINDS. THE TWO THEMES HAVE
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SOMETIMES COMBINED, AS WHEN FATHER NGUYEN DINH THI OF

THE "COMMUNAUTE VIETNAMIENNE" GROUP LAUNCHED AN APPEAL ON APRIL 2 FOR AID TO THE WAR VICTIMS. THI GAVE A GENERALLY PRO-PRG VIEW OF THE REFUGEE SITUATION. HIS CALL WAS FOR AID TO THE PRG-CONTROLLED ZONES. FIFTEEN TONS OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES COLLECTED BY THI'S ASSOCIATION LEFT PARIS APRIL 9 ON AN AIR FRANCE CARGO PLANE FOR VIENTIANNE, DESTINED FOR THE PRG AREAS OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

3. OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS HAVE INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

(A) AN UNNAMED MEMBER OF BAO DAI'S ENTOURAGE (A GVN SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT IT WAS HIS FRENCH MISTRESS) SAID IN LATE MARCH THAT THE EX-EMPEROR "WOULD NOT EVADE" AN APPEAL FROM HIS COUNTRY FOR MEDIATION. BAO DAI HIMSELF EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO PLAY A ROLE, IF "EVERYONE AGREES", IN AN APRIL 2 INTERVIEW WITH AFP. THOUGH PROMINENTLY REPORTED IN THE PRESS AT THE TIME, THESE STATEMENTS HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE PUBLIC ATTENTION SINCE THEN.

(B) THE FRENCH NATIONAL UNION OF PARATROOPERS ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE MARCH 31 CONDEMNING THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS AND ASKING THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO AID THE WAR VICTIMS. ANOTHER FRENCH VETERANS GROUP ALSO ISSUED AN APPEAL THE SAME DAY.

(C) LEADERS OF THE GAULLIST UDR PARTY MET APRIL 1 AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND EXPRESSED A GENERALIZED CONCERN FOR THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WITHOUT TAKING SIDES. SOME UDR LEADERS REPORTEDLY SHOWED "ASTONISHMENT" THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN "SILENT SO LONG" ON THE PROBLEM. SIX DAYS LATER, AFTER THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD BEGUN TO SHOW INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM PROBLEM, THE UDR LEADERSHIP ISSUED A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT.

(D) TRAN DINH LAN, HEAD OF A "THIRD FORCE" GROUP, STATED IN AN INTERVIEW APRIL 2 THAT "THE HOUR OF THE THIRD POLITICAL FORCE HAS ARRIVED". HE ACCUSED

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PRESIDENT THIEU OF BEING THE OBSTACLE TO PEACE, AND HE BELIEVED THAT FRANCE COULD PLAY A MEDIATING ROLE.

(E) DUONG MINH DUC, THE SON OF GENERAL "BIG" MINH, RETURNED APRIL 3 TO PARIS AFTER VISITING HIS FATHER IN SAIGON. (DUC RESIDES IN PARIS.) HE LATER DISTRIBUTED A STATEMENT ON HIS FATHER'S BEHALF THAT PLAYED UP FRANCE AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

(F) THE "ASSOCIATION FRANCE-VIETNAM DU SUD" DENOUNCED
THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS IN A COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED

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FM USDEL JEC PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASH 0259

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 JEC PARIS 09029

APRIL 4. THE GROUP EXPRESSED INDIGNATION AT "THE
ABSENCE OF REACTION IN THE FREE WORLD".

(G) A GROUP OF "THIRD FORCE" LEADERS INCLUDING HO
THONG MINH, TRAN DINH LAN, AND NGUYEN LONG HELD A
PRESS CONFERENCE IN PARIS ON APRIL 9, IN WHICH THEY
REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT POLITICAL FREEDOM
COULD EXIST UNDER THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS. THEY
CALLED FOR THIEU'S DEPARTURE, AND THEY SAID THAT FRANCE
WAS "THE COUNTRY BEST PLACED AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIETNAM" TO ASSIST IN A
SETTLEMENT UNDER THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THEY CLAIMED
THAT THE "THIRD FORCE" HAS CONTACTS WITH THE AMERICANS.
(WE ARE POUCHING TO EA/VN A COPY OF A COMMUNIQUE OF
THIS GROUP LISTING THE FULL MEMBERSHIP.)

COMMENTS:

4. THERE IS LITTLE DISCERNIBLE FOCUS IN

THESE RATHER FREE-WHEELING ACTIVITIES, ALTHOUGH THE
PERSISTENT APPEAL FOR FRENCH INVOLVEMENT IS STRIKING.
AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THESE MOVES ARE STRICTLY
PERIPHERAL TO THE MORE INFLUENTIAL ACTIONS OF THE
FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN BOTH THE HUMANITARIAN AND
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POLITICAL SPHERES, ON WHICH EMBASSY PARIS HAS
REPORTED. WE JUDGE, HOWEVER, THAT THE FRENCH
GOVERNMENT HAS INTENTIONALLY OR OTHERWISE STIRRED UP
SOME OF THE POLITICAL ACTIVITY AMONG VIETNAMESE
"NEUTRALISTS". TRAN DINH LAN IS WIDELY REPUTED TO BE
A FRENCH AGENT.

5. THE "THIRD FORCE" VIETNAMESE HERE, PARTICULARLY THOSE
MOST INCLINED TOWARD THE COMMUNISTS, HAVE UNDER-
STANDABLY TAKEN HEART FROM THE RECENT EVENTS. THEY ARE
THE ONES TALKING THE LOUDEST. BUT THEY SHARE THE SENSE
OF CONFUSION SEEN AMONG MOST MEMBERS OF THE
VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY WHO ARE NOT OUTRIGHT PRO-
COMMUNISTS, AS EVERYBODY AWAITS THE MILITARY AND
POLITICAL OUTCOME IN SOUTH VIETNAM.
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